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SECURITY INFORMATION
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT NO. CD NO.

COUNTRY Hungary

DATE DISTR. 6 Feb. 1952

SUBJECT Comments on the American Flyers Incident

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1. Source is convinced that the Hungarian Air Force and Hungarian Government were not informed in any detail of the case until the Soviets had completed their interrogation of the four American flyers forced down in Hungary. He is sure that the American aircraft, off its course over Hungarian territory, was considered a sudden windfall by the Soviets who hoped to be able to tie the aircraft and its crew into the recent espionage trials involving alleged American trained agents in the Soviet Union, Rumania, and Bulgaria. As soon as the Soviets realized that the aircraft had been on a legitimate flight, the matter was dropped by them and turned over to the Hungarians for exploitation. This assumption is borne out by the Tass release and the Hungarian note of protest which appeared almost simultaneously on 3 December 1951. Between 19 November, when the aircraft was forced down, and the date of the first Tass release, thirteen to fourteen days later, the Soviet probably completed their interrogation. Only during the last few days of this interval were the Hungarians briefed by the Soviets, and the time was then too short and the evidence too tenuous to make a good case out of the incident.
2. Having entered wholeheartedly into a violent tirade against the "blood thirsty" U.S. Government, it was impossible for the Hungarians to release the aircraft and its crew. It was equally impossible, on the other hand, to convict the crew on any of the Hungarian charges -- if the charges had been proven, the Soviets would not have turned the crew over to the Hungarians in the first place. Source then considers the element of blackmail for blackmail's sake and states that his knowledge of Hungarian economic affairs leads him to believe that the Hungarian Government is in such a need of hard currency that it will do anything to procure dollars. The American aircrew detained in Hungary offered a unique chance of getting dollars with relatively little effort or risk. Source states that he discussed this aspect of the case

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3. Source believes that the "American Flyers Incident" damaged Soviet-Hungarian relations. Hungarians with whom he has spoken consider the action of the Soviet air force in Hungary to have been a breach of Hungarian sovereignty. The feeling is that if the American aircraft had to be forced down, the Hungarian Air Force should have done it. Source further states that at a

shoulders which source interprets as an indication of Hungarian bewilderment over the matter and of annoyance at the Soviet action.

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